

STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

REPORT

OF THE

Committee on Humane Institutions,

TO THE

LEGISLATURE AT THEIR MAY SESSION,

1875.

HARTFORD:
THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD CO., PRINTERS.
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R E P O R T.

THE State Medical Society, 1872, appointed a committee from each county to report on Inebriate Asylums. This committee, through its chairman, reported to the society at their annual meeting in 1873.

This report placed before the society many interesting facts in regard to intemperance, and recommended the appointment of a special committee to bring the subject suitably before the legislature then in session, with a view to obtain, if possible, the enactment of a law to be entitled, "An Act for the Reformation of Persons of Intemperate Habits."

This report was unanimously accepted by the State Medical Society, and a committee of three was appointed, viz: B. N. Comings, G. B. Hawley, and G. W. Russell.

This committee immediately presented the subject to the Committee on Humane Institutions, and they recommended to the legislature that a committee of five should be appointed by them to investigate the subject of inebriate asylums, and the penal treatment of the inebriate. This committee consisted of B. N. Comings, G. B. Hawley, G. W. Russell, L. P. Waldo, and C. H. Briscoe.

They visited many inebriate asylums in different States, inquired into the management, satisfied themselves in regard to their value and importance to the inebriate, and made a report in regard to inebriate asylums to the legislature at its May session, 1874.

The committee unanimously agreed that an inebriate asylum should be established, either under the management of

the State, or controlled by a corporation. There are many reasons why they preferred the controlling power of a corporation.

By request of this committee, the Connecticut Reformatory Home was incorporated by the general assembly of that year, which was changed by the legislature of 1875 to the asylum at Walnut Hill. The penal treatment of the inebriate and its connection with crime, was presented with so much force that the same committee was continued to report to the present legislature on the penal treatment of the inebriate. An act was also passed to commit and control the inebriate, dipsomaniac, and habitual drunkard, in an inebriate asylum within this State.

The corporators of the Connecticut Reformatory Home were called together at New Haven, October, 1874, and the society was partially organized by enacting by-laws, when they adjourned to April, 1875, to complete the organization by the election of twelve directors, who, in company with the life directors, by the subscription of \$200 each, together with the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and Treasurer, govern the institution. There is great interest shown throughout the State in behalf of this institution, and many letters of inquiry are received when it will be established. The most positive proof of the interest felt, is by the subscription of \$200 each of sixty different persons. All this effort is made and this amount of money given, without the least hope of pecuniary reward, for there is no possibility or expectation of any compensation to any donor. The directors have purchased forty acres of land, in the vicinity of Hartford, at a cost of \$20,000.

This effort is made to unite with the State to cure, if possible, the inebriate who is anxious and willing to reform. The State cannot ask this whole charity to be established by individual effort. If once established, there will be many sources from which funds will be received. Donations will be received from the benevolent, and the same generous effort which has been exhibited in its establishment, will be encouraged until this institution will be numbered among the many noble charities of the State.

The State has enacted laws to commit the drunkard to an inebriate asylum. At the present there is no legal place where the drunkard can be confined for his own safety, and that of his friends. They are illegally shut up in the station houses, and are confined in the jails ; they are left to run at large to the great annoyance of the community and danger to themselves ; they are confined in our insane asylums, more to the demoralization of the institution than of benefit to themselves. The testimony of superintendents of insane asylums is decidedly against their admission and association with insane patients.

It is not designed to take the common drunkard, but a judicious selection should be made from those of mental capacity, who are willing and anxious to recover. According to the reports of our inebriate asylums, one-third are cured, one-third improved, one-third remain the same. They are not called recovered until they have been watched and remain sober for three years, after leaving the institution. If they fall during that time they are not considered as cured, although they may not fall the second time. This is the experience of all inebriate asylums. Fifty years ago, the insane were in the same neglected condition as the inebriate of the present time. In fifty years from now, the inebriate asylum will be as important to the inebriate, as the insane asylum is to the insane persons.

If they are not cured, it is of great importance that there should be some place where they can be cared for. It is a blessing that a father can place his drunken son where he can feel that he is cared for, as well as a blessing for the inebriate to feel there is a place where he can at least make the effort to reform.

The subject of inebriety is attracting much attention, not only in this country, but in England. Maryland has recently incorporated the Harlem Lodge, an institution of the same character as the asylum at Walnut Hill, and it receives aid annually from the State. They have recently purchased thirty-five acres of land in the vicinity of Baltimore for

\$35,000, and are arranging their buildings to receive patients.

The Inebriate Home, Kings County, L. I., has been eight years in successful operation. In 1873, 161 inebriates were under treatment—101 males, 60 females. The success of this institution alone has proved the importance of inebriate asylums. It is aided by a certain portion of the money received from licensing the sale of liquors in Kings County. It also provides for patients who pay a part or the whole of their board.

The Washington Home, Boston, treated in 1873, 419 inebriates; it was established in 1856. From that time until 1873 it has had 4,887 inebriates under treatment.

The institution at Binghamton has treated since 1867, 2,237 inebriates. Its average number of inebriates is about 85, and treats 250 different persons every year. It was established by an enthusiast, who divided the capital of the institution into a large number of shares; these shares he disposed of at \$10 per share. He obtained, it is understood, control of the institution and all its funds. With this money and other charity funds he procured the present site, and erected expensive buildings. The benevolent citizens learned that this individual, with a few others, were running the institution for private ends. They purchased his entire interest in the institution for \$35,000. This individual then called on those who had purchased one share for \$10, and had that share assigned to himself without cost, thus again getting the control. While he was procuring these shares the State took possession of the institution, and he sued the State to recover. From that time it has been subject to frequent changes of its officers, to its detriment.

It is not the design of the directors to erect expensive buildings, but to commence in an economical manner by supplying such buildings as the immediate wants of the institution demand. It is designed to begin on a general plan, which may be enlarged according to circumstances. It is not the most expensive buildings that insure the success of the institution, but rather by the constant care of those who are will-

ing to give their time and money, with no expectation of reward for the recovery of the repenting drunkard of the State. They have a right to demand pecuniary assistance from the State, to unite with them in the advancement of this great charity. Help those who help themselves, is a maxim too true to be treated with neglect. The State does not hesitate to license the sale of liquors, for which the towns receive an annual income of over \$200,000. Can the State refuse to give a small portion of this money to aid in restoring to society and friends (or at least to make the effort), some of those who are victims of this gain? Can the State add over \$200,000 to the treasury of the towns from the blood of its citizens, and refuse to give a small portion of this gain to aid those who are striving to escape from this terrible monster? We would not ask money from the treasury, if we could receive but a small portion of the price which is paid for the privilege of manufacturing the drunkard, that we may endeavor to see him "clothed and sitting in his right mind."

CHARLES D. YALE,

Chairman.





